Saskatchewan Agriculture and Food

Farm & Food Report

Communications Branch, Walter Scott Building
3085 Albert Street, Regina, Canada, S4S 0B1

Saskatchewan

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FARM AND FOOD REPORT WILL BE SUSPENDED FOR THE WEEKS OF JULY 17TH AND 24TH AND WILL RESUME JULY 31ST.

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Log Number: 06-27-128
Week of July 3, 2006

2006 SASKATCHEWAN HORSE FEDERATION DIRECTORY BEING COMPILED

If you are part of the Saskatchewan horse industry and you want to let the world know about it, there is no better way than to ensure your operation or business is listed in the 2006 edition of the Saskatchewan Horse Federation (SHF) Directory.

"We started the directory to develop and promote the horse industry, and spread the good word far beyond as a vehicle for the industry," Saskatchewan Horse Federation executive director Mae Smith said. "It has come to the point where a lot of the members are finding a lot of value in it."

The previous edition of the directory was circulated through international trade fairs and equine shows in Germany, France and Spain. The directory has also been distributed in Australia and the United States, and at Agribition and Farm Progress Show in Regina.

Smith believes the growing popularity of the directory is due to the growing importance of the horse sector in Saskatchewan's economy.

"We know that there are in the neighbourhood of 100,000 horses in Saskatchewan, and we are the third largest horse producing province in Canada" Smith said. "I think the horse industry is very viable in Saskatchewan because it has so many spin-off benefits to it. There is a huge recreation component with the competition and sport part of it. It's an enormous economic vehicle when you look at it in that manner.

"The directory is a resource that is very valuable in marketing. Breeders, and businesses associated with the horse sector – for example, those dealing with insurance, vehicles, trucks and trailers – are included in the directory. Many of our exhibition associations advertise in there."

The SHF has more than 6,000 members in 140 clubs and affiliate member associations. Members, and other agencies like the Western College of Veterinary Medicine, are contacted to collect their information for the directory. The SHF also publishes a bi-monthly magazine called Show Trail in which people are invited to participate.

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The SHF is increasing the number of copies of the directory published this year. It will be distributed to all SHF members, and will also be available at tack stores, feed suppliers, and Canadian Western Agribition. The directory, provided as a service to SHF members and the horse industry, is free to anybody interested.

"One of the things we want to do with this publication is circulate it to our membership," Smith said. "A recent horse industry study indicated that between 75 and 80 per cent of all the horses in Saskatchewan are bought and sold within the province. So for the producer, there is a very strong market right here in their own backyard. It is important to reach out to them."

Anyone interested in participating in the directory has until the end of August to submit content to the SHF.

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UPDATED PASTURE DEVELOPMENT COSTS RESOURCE AVAILABLE ONLINE

Producers considering converting cropland to pasture might find it beneficial to consult the updated Pasture Development Costs resource available on Saskatchewan Agriculture and Food's website.

"The pasture development cost document is a good way to get information on the cost of establishing pasture and the annual operating costs for pastures," Forage Development Specialist Wally Vanin, who compiled the publication, said. "This information can then be used to evaluate the profitability of converting cropland to pasture.

"The publication looks at the costs for the brown, dark brown and black soil zones. It is based on a moderate stocking rate. Annual costs are calculated, but will depend on your stocking rate."

The publication provides a format for calculating the cost of developing a new pasture. The costs of establishing a pasture with crested wheatgrass/alfalfa or meadow bromegrass/alfalfa blends are shown on a soil zone basis. Machine costs are similar for each soil zone, and are calculated based on the cost of developing 160 acres of new pasture.

Machinery costs are based on figures in the 2004 Farm Machinery Custom and Rental Rate Guide, also available on the department's website. As costs and machine size can vary significantly, actual costs should be used when available.

Costs are broken down into variable (fertilizer, herbicide, fuel, lubrication and repairs) and other (machine depreciation, investment) costs. Investment costs include the construction of two miles of four-strand barbed wire fence and a 3,000 cubic-yard dugout.

"When considering any water source, be sure to contact your nearest PFRA office before construction, for more information on water quality and quantity. Ensure that any buried infrastructure is located before any excavation is started."

Forage is to be seeded into standing crop stubble in the spring. A one litre per acre glyphosate pre-seed burn-off treatment is used for weed control. Straw and chaff must be properly spread in the fall of the year prior to seeding the forage.

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Seeding rates vary based on soil zones, specific areas and conditions.

Vanin found that annual per acre operating costs were similar in all three soil zones.

"However, based on moderate stocking rates, the cost per animal unit month is lower as you go north."

The pasture development document was originally produced in 1999 and includes a worksheet where producers can enter their own data to calculate costs.

"With this publication, the establishment costs were amortized over the first seven years of the pasture. The producer actually has a choice of amortizing those costs, or simply absorbing those establishment costs out of his or her current operation. Most often, producers pay those costs right off the bat.

"The publication uses full costs for all items. The costs tend to be high, and producers may find lower cost fencing materials to reduce their costs. For the sake of the publication, we used full costs on all items. Therefore, costs are fairly high, but producers could probably do it for less."

The publication is available on the website at www.agr.gov.sk.cva. Click on Crops, Forage/Pasture, Forage Management/Production, then click on the document name.

More detailed information on grazing capacity, agronomics, seed varieties, lease arrangements, fencing and machinery costs can be obtained from Saskatchewan Agriculture and Food's Agriculture Knowledge Centre at 1-888-457-2377, or from Saskatchewan Agriculture and Food's website.

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AGRI-ARM PROGRAM FIELD DAYS COMING UP ACROSS THE PROVINCE

The Agriculture Applied Research Management (Agri-ARM) program, a network of applied research sites focussed on increasing per acre income and provincial gross domestic product from crops, will once again host a series of summer field days.

"Each Agri-ARM site has a tour to view projects that are of interest to producers and industry," Saskatchewan Agriculture and Food Crop Business Section Manager Dr. Larry Gutek said. "Projects are related to production, technology transfer, new varieties and development and processing opportunities for new crops. Quite a range of demonstrations are offered to interested producers."

There are eight Agri-ARM sites located across the province. Each site has the necessary infrastructure to carry out quality research and demonstration, including a manager responsible for technical issues and an affiliated regional crop development specialist to support technology transfer.

"During the tours, you actually view research projects, and talk with research scientists and industry representatives," Gutek said. "It is a highly interactive experience."

Projects may include applied research, in which replicated experiments are used to validate or evaluate data, or demonstrations of new crops, technology and practices. The Agri-ARM program results in knowledge, information products/events, and research and technology transfer services.

"These are all facilities that are engaged in research on a regular basis, although some have more capacity than others in doing replicated experiments, while others are more focused on demonstrations of new crops, technology and practices. There is a broad range of events, and we have good sponsorship from industry as well as from federal research centres at Scott, Melfort, Indian Head and Swift Current."

Agri-ARM has now completed five field seasons of quality applied research and demonstrations to address emerging crop opportunities. The program is designed to assist Saskatchewan Agriculture and Food (SAF) in meeting goals focused on developing a thriving, environmentally sustainable and diversified agricultural industry through working with strong, resourceful agricultural people.

In addition to applied research and demonstration, a business incubation component has also been introduced. Project specific funding will be allocated to sites that are fostering new opportunities in agriculture business development.

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Dates and contact phone numbers for 2006 Agri-ARM field days follow:

July 7 - Canola Day at Seager Wheeler Farm in Rosthern
(306) 232-5959

July 12 - Western Applied Research Corporation at Scott Research Farm
(306) 446-7475

July 13 - Wheatland Conservation Area at Swift Current
(306) 778-8285

July 18 - Indian Head Agricultural Research Foundation at Indian Head
(306) 695-4244

July 20 - South East Research Farm at Redvers
(306) 452-3161

July 21 - East Central Research Foundation in Canora
(306) 563-5551

August 1 - Conservation Learning Centre in Prince Albert
(306) 953-2796

July 19 - Northeast Agriculture Research Foundation in Melfort
(306) 878-8807

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For more information, contact:

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U OF S CROP DIAGNOSTIC TOUR TO PROVIDE IN-DEPTH LOOK AT FIELD ISSUES

If you want to get a snapshot of agricultural field conditions and issues around Saskatoon, the University of Saskatchewan's Crop Diagnostic Tour on July 5 may be just what you need.

The Crop Diagnostic Tour is a unique learning experience in field scouting and problem assessment, providing a hands-on approach to crop management practices and issues and offering a networking opportunity for agronomists and producers.

"In the past, we've done the entire crop diagnostic school on university land. This is no longer an option due to human and financial resource challenges," University of Saskatchewan agriculture, food and horticulture program co-ordinator Kari Nicolas said. "This year, it is in a tour format instead. We are planning on touring plots in and around Saskatoon – probably no more than an hour outside the city – to look at some production issues."

While the event is intended for agrologists, producers are also welcome to attend.

"There will be a number of agricultural companies represented on the tour. We target anyone doing crop-related advising for a living – anybody working with retail outlets; chemical companies; the provincial government; crop insurance people; Federated Co-op. This tour is for anyone whose work requires them to have some skills in the crop diagnostic area."

Nicolas says independent consultant Dave Rhyhor is the field scout who has been hired to go out around the city and look at different fields, and work with university researchers to see what projects they have slated for the summer.

"He will also talk to producers in the area to see if they have anything interesting we can look at," Nicolas said. "We look for crops with disease; herbicide issues; fertility issues; seeding stage issues, anything and everything that we can pretty much see in and around the area."

The crop diagnostic tour is how most of the companies do their in-house training, Nicolas said, and is why the event is different from typical crop tours.

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"It is not just driving by and looking at fields. People will get off the bus and we will have resource experts talking to them in the field. Whatever it is they are looking at, we will have them doing some hands-on work."

The registration cost of $200 includes materials; transportation; refreshments and lunch. The fee also covers the cost of bringing out the resource people and field scout, plus a workbook for tour participants.

Participants should plan on a full day of activity. For more information, or to register for the tour, call (306) 966-5592 as soon as possible. For tour details, visit http://www.extension.usask.ca/go/cropdiagnostictour.

More details will be posted on the website as they become available.

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REGINA PIG GENETICS COMPANY LANDS MAJOR DEAL IN CHINA

Hypor may not be a household name in Saskatchewan, but perhaps it should be.

The international pig breeding company recently signed joint venture agreements with two of China's largest agri-business companies. The agreements with Sichuan South Hope Company Ltd. (New Hope) and Shandong Liuhe Group Co., Ltd. (Liuhe) are for the production and distribution of breeding pigs in China.

"Our Chinese partners have access to the market, and we have the pigs and the technology," Hypor Chief Marketing Officer Marc Broadbent said. "Together, you could say we have a winning team."

The investment involves 600 pigs in each joint venture, worth about $2 million, and will produce six million slaughter pigs per year. There is also investment in the farms, equipment and land.

Hypor will supply the pigs from the three barns it operates in Saskatchewan.

"For Hypor as a whole, Saskatchewan is a very important part of the business. The barns located in Saskatchewan are very healthy, as are the animals, due to low populations of people and pigs. This is an ideal place for breeding, raising and distributing pigs all over the world."

For Broadbent, the agreement is a reward after a major investment of time and effort. Lately, he has travelled to China monthly.

"To come up with a deal like this takes a lot. New Hope was a company that I was doing business with when I was working for a previous employer. So it took two jobs, in a way, to achieve this," Broadbent said.

"It also took several generations. My father worked in agriculture in China before me. You can appreciate the importance of adaptation to the culture, and the importance of understanding the local culture through living and working overseas for a number of years. The Chinese are tough negotiators and dealing with them in business can be very demanding. But perseverance pays off."

One of the greatest assets Hypor has is the way in which being Canadian opens a lot of doors, Broadbent said.

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"China has a strong affinity for Canada as a brand itself. It is not just Hypor that sold these pigs. It is also Canada that sold these pigs. It is a result of the strong relationship between Canada and China," he said.

Saskatchewan will benefit over the long run from the initial delivery of pigs, Broadbent said. Some of Hypor's employees will go over to China to deliver technical service and follow-up, and the breeding program will be supported from Saskatchewan over the long term.

In hindsight, Broadbent is also appreciative of the vision companies like Genex had when they started breeding pigs in the province.

"Genex had a lot of foresight putting their business here because of the low populations of pigs and people. There will always be a strong pig breeding business in Saskatchewan," he said. "When we put that seed stock into another country, the idea is to create another Saskatchewan, in a way, where those pigs can then support their local area."

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